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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 002771

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PM MOVING TO REINSTATE BAGHDAD DEPUTY MAYOR NAEEM

REF: BAGHDAD 575

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Greg D'Elia for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Sadrism-linked Naeem Aboub al Kaby looks poised for reinstatement as Deputy Mayor of Baghdad by order of Prime Minister Maliki. Naeem's return follows his politically motivated dismissal in February 2008. Baghdad Provincial Council (PC) Chairman Mueen has voiced disapproval of what he considers to be the Prime Minister's meddling in Baghdad provincial affairs, but for now Mueen sees no legal recourse to resist the move. In this case, the Prime Minister's motives appear primarily responsive to the local, not national political situation. Naeem does not enjoy high standing within the Sadrism Trend due in part to a perceived failure to provide patronage. End Summary.

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Background  
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¶2. (C) In February 2008 after a Baghdad PC vote, PC Chairman Mueen instructed the Baghdad Mayor Saber Nabad al Isawi to dismiss all three of his deputy mayors for ineffectiveness and corrupt practices (reftel). Most observers agreed then that the true target of the firings was Naeem and the other two were for political cover. The political ambitions of Naeem, who has ties to the Sadrist, were said to have upset Baghdad's ISCI/Badr PC chairman and mayor. A snag occurred when Naeem refused to leave, citing the existing law that places the Amanat (Baghdad City Hall) under the authority of the Council of Ministers (COM). While the COM has jurisdiction over the Amanat de jure, the Amanat has fallen de facto under the PC's dominion since provincial elections in 2005. An awkward compromise allowing Naeem to stay on as an advisor resolved the impasse between Naeem and the PC Chairman. (Note: When Abd al Hussein, the Amanat Director General in charge of projects, was named the new deputy mayor, Naeem allegedly called Abd al Hussein and asked "You are the new deputy mayor" correct? Well then, if you are a man, come and kick me out of my office!" No one ever came to evict Naeem. End Note).

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Redemption  
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¶3. (C) Eventually, COM investigated the charges against Naeem and found them to be baseless. Shortly thereafter, Naeem met with the Prime Minister and pleaded his case, explaining that the charges against him had nothing to do with his job performance, but rather his rising popularity. The Prime Minister apparently agreed and sent a written order to the Mayor directing that Naeem be appointed as Deputy Mayor in charge of municipalities. As of August 27, the Mayor had drafted but not yet signed two memos: the first dismissing the current incumbent Abd al Hussein and the second memo naming Naeem as the new deputy mayor.

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Comment

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14. (C) Naeem,s reinstatement bodes well for Baghdad PRT and its future engagement with the Amanat, as Naeem has been willing to work with the USG in the past. Naeem has Sadrist ties, but claims that his unwillingness to play the patronage game has alienated him from the movement, for example, fellow Sadrist PC Deputy Chairman Mohan al Saidi voted in favor of Naeem's dismissal in February 2008. It is a widely accepted fact that Naeem has political ambitions and he has admitted aspirations to one day become mayor and more. (Note: Naeem, born in 1967, is a PC member and served as Director General in Sadr City for the Amanat prior to becoming deputy mayor. End Note) Neither Mayor Saber nor PC Chairman Mueen is happy with this latest development and more drama may be in store as provincial elections near. While it might be tempting to interpret Maliki,s reinstatement of Naeem as a reconciliatory gesture towards Sadrists, at present this move does not appear indicative of a larger strategy or have an immediate impact beyond the administration of Baghdad. End Comment.

BUTENIS